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## Challenges in conducting evaluation and research: experiences of English in Action in Bangladesh

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# Challenges in Conducting Evaluation and Research: Experiences of English in Action in Bangladesh

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# Overview



- English in Action
- EIA evaluation and research
- Challenges & way forward
- Concluding remarks

# Supporting English language teaching and learning

2008 => 2017



Implementer:



Funder:



BMB Mott MacDonald



The Open University



BBC

MEDIA ACTION

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDIA  
AROUND THE WORLD

# Scale

PILOT  
750  
teachers

UPSCALE 1  
4000  
teachers

UPSCALE 2  
8000  
teachers

I&S  
64,000  
teachers

76,000 teachers  
10.5 million  
students



## Scale

**Across  
Bangladesh: 112  
upazilas so far**

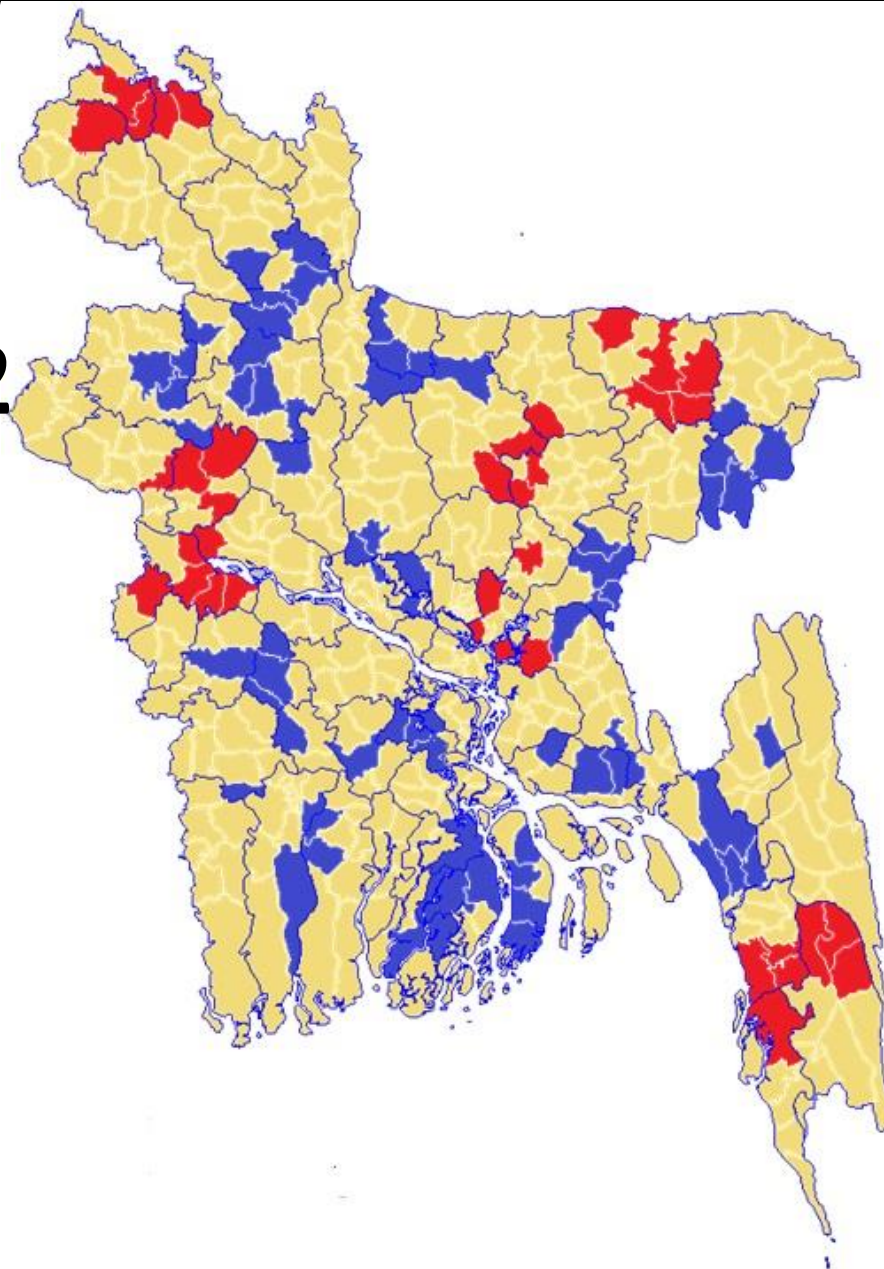


**2012: 35**



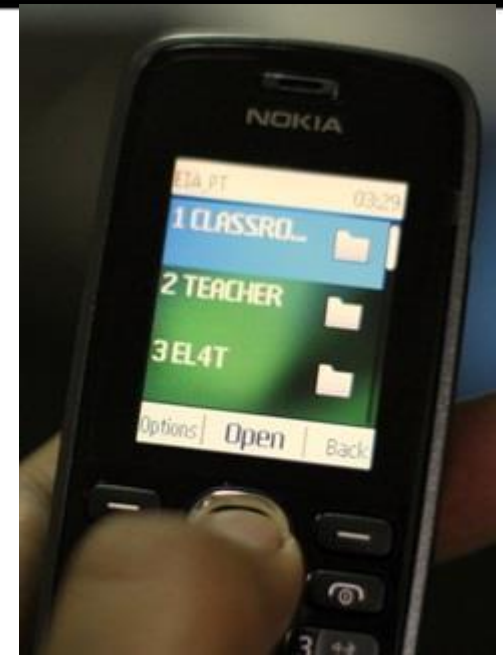
**2013/14: 70**

**2015 onwards...**

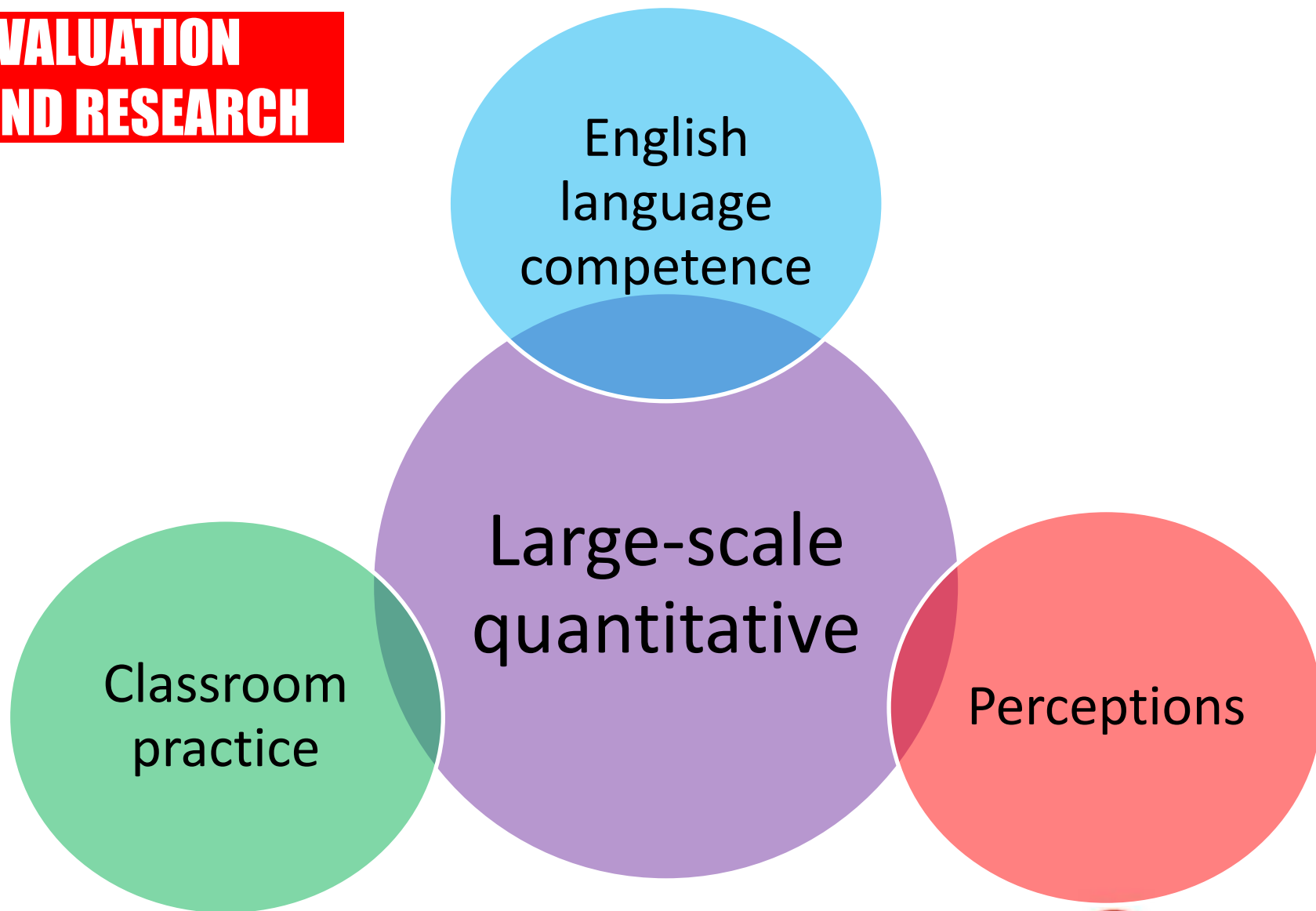


# Teacher professional development & classroom materials

| Audio visual                        | Print based                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Listening activities                | Activity Guide, Posters, Flashcards |
| Video with narrator                 | Teacher Guide                       |
| English language for teachers audio | EL4T workbook                       |
| Speaker                             |                                     |

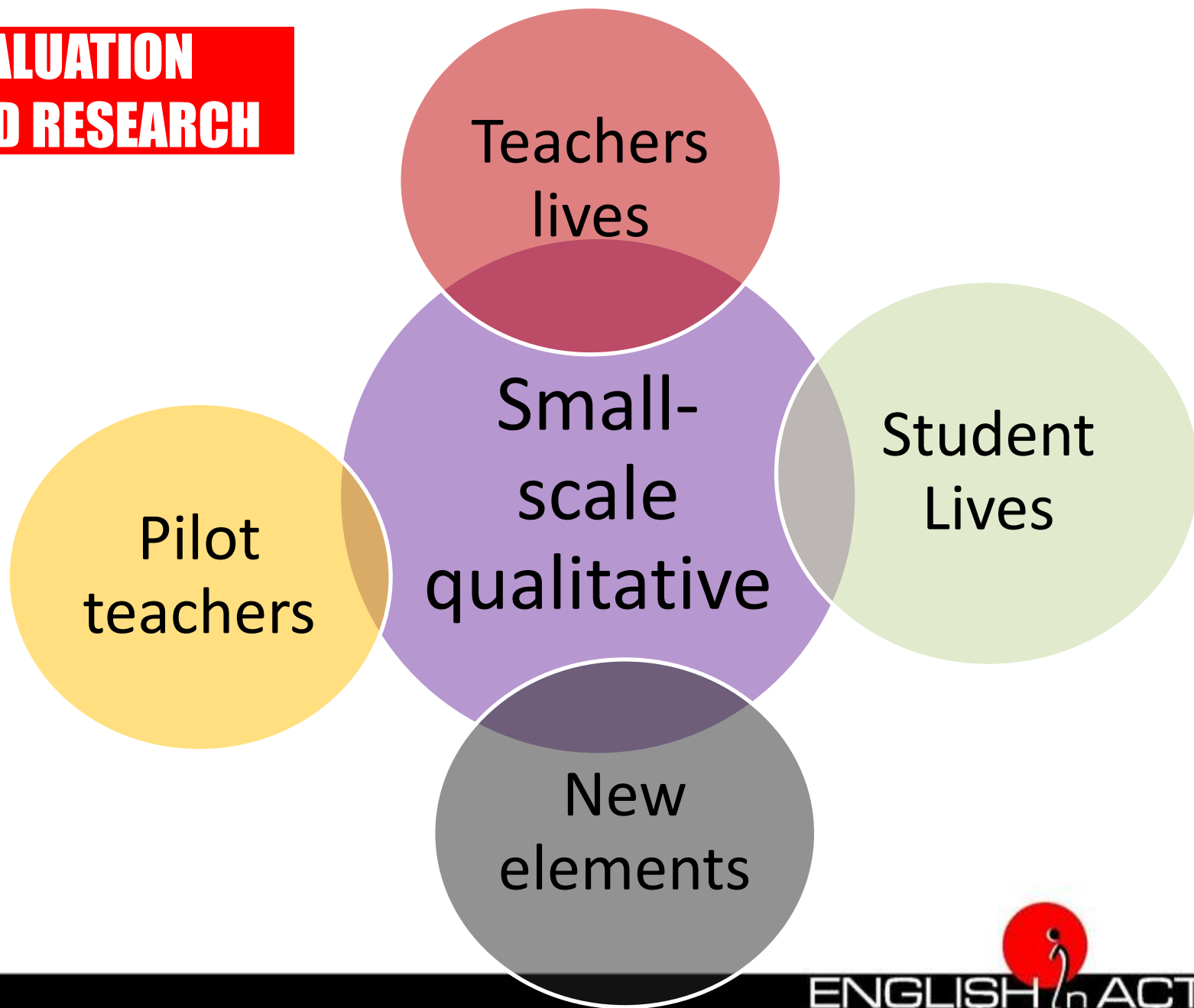


# EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

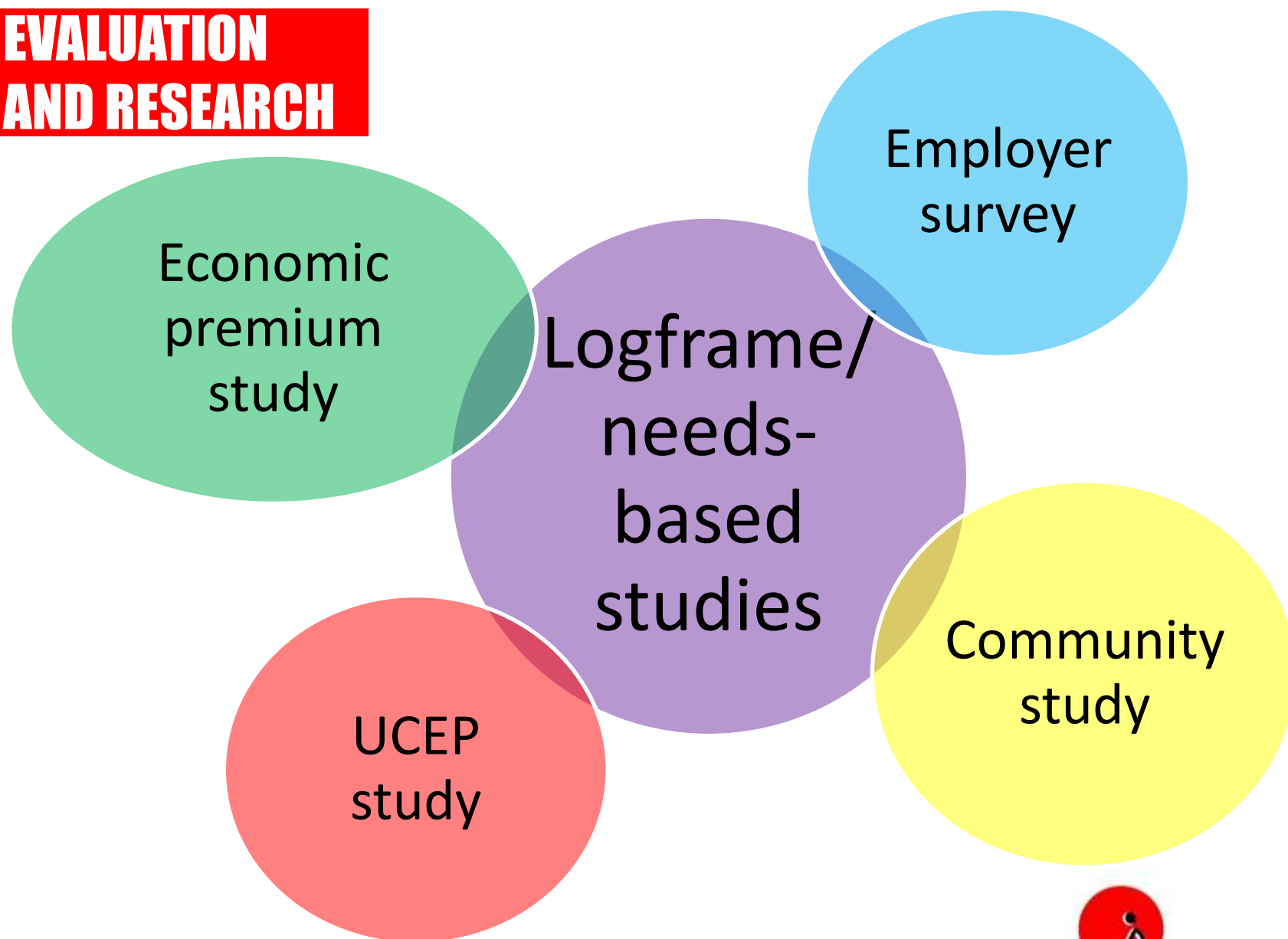




**EVALUATION  
AND RESEARCH**



# EVALUATION AND RESEARCH



# Challenges & ways forward



PC: kimbeach.com

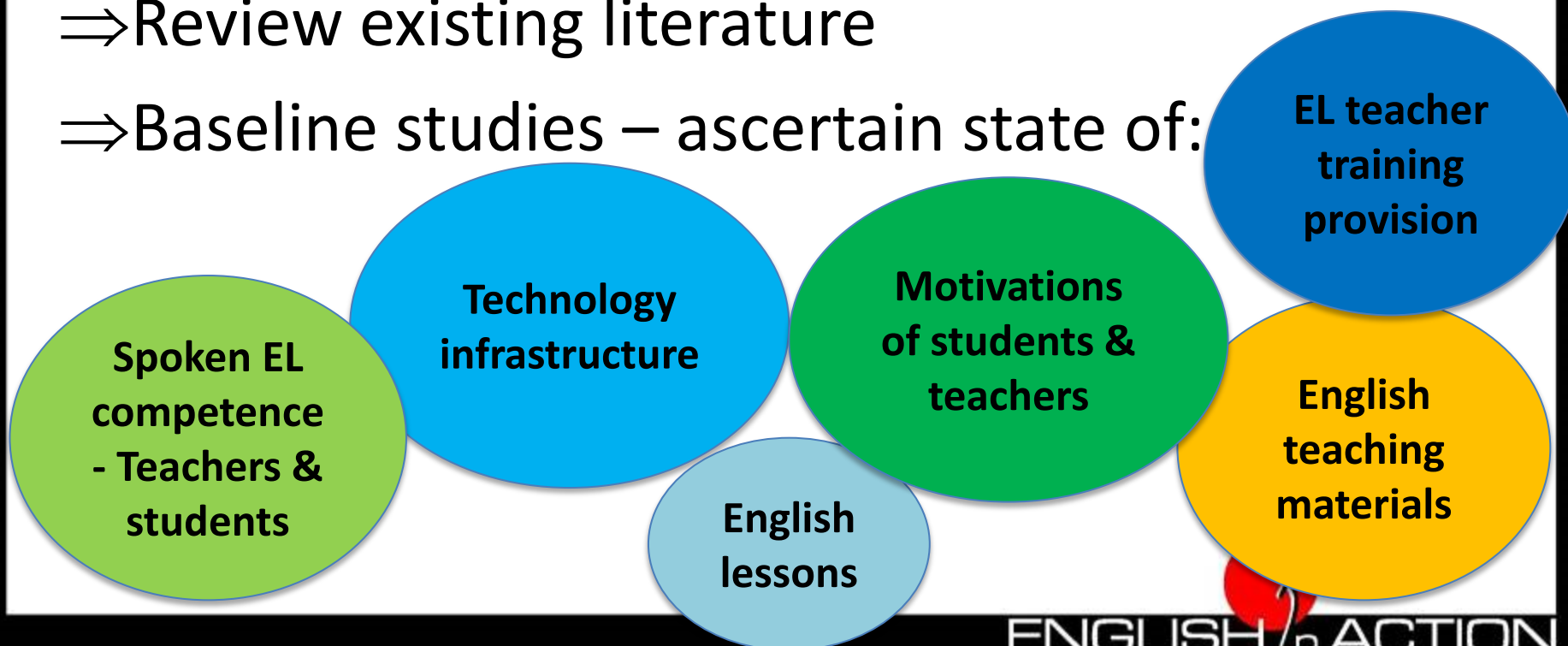
## **Challenge 1: Little background information & literature directly relevant to the project**

- Need of information to design the programme

### **Way forward:**

⇒ Review existing literature

⇒ Baseline studies – ascertain state of:



## **Challenge 1: Little background information & literature directly relevant to the project**

Baseline studies provided:

- ⇒ Evidence-based platform to design programme
- ⇒ Benchmark against which to evaluate progress of EIA teachers & students
- ⇒ Example: EL competence

**2010  
baseline**

**2011  
Pilot teachers  
(after 12  
months)**

**2013  
Cohort 2  
teachers (after  
12 months)**



## Challenge 2: 'Reactive effect'

Classroom observation

- 'Reactive' effect

(Webb, 1966; Bryman 2008)

- Do teachers behave as they normally do when being observed?
  - Obtrusive nature of the researcher?
  - Impact of presumed hierarchy?
  - Validity of data collected? Authentic teacher practice?

⇒ classroom practice  
⇒ community study  
⇒ teachers lives  
⇒ students lives

## Challenge 2: 'Reactive effect'

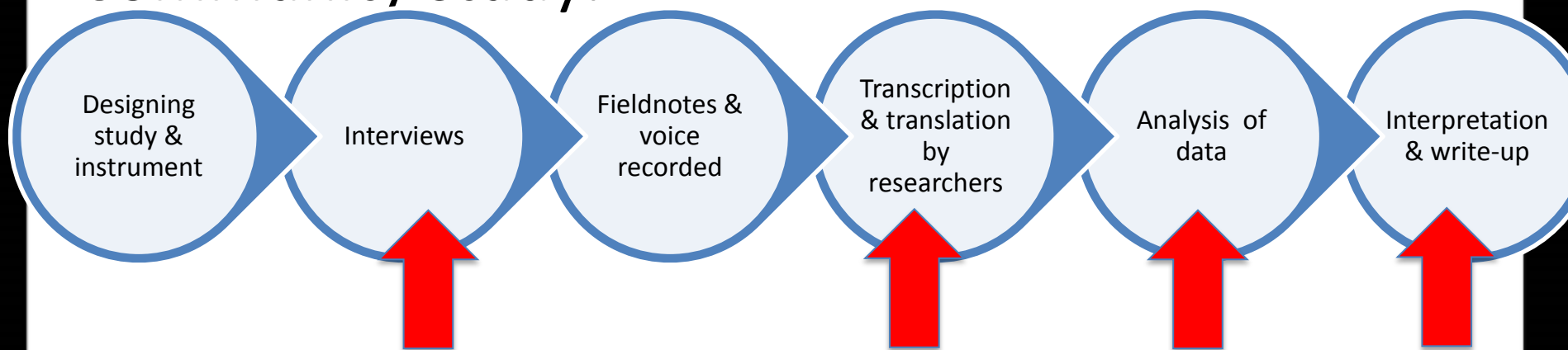
### Way forward:

- Training & documentation:
  - Ask researchers not to judge - objective
  - Explain study to T & HT fully, & not there to judge
  - Reassure T confidential use of data
  - Researcher introduces self to class
  - Be as unobtrusive as possible (sit at back, be quiet, try not to disturb)
- Triangulation – compare findings with those of other studies to validate findings
- Report the findings with relative caution

## Challenge 3: Translation & interpretation

- Research studies for a large-scale programme with a number of partners
- Different personnel involved => multiple levels of interpretation

Community study:



## Challenge 3: Translation & interpretation

### Way forward:

- International team designing instruments – English => Bangla; internal/external checking process.
- Piloting instruments - check understanding by teachers & students
- Checking of analysis by bi-lingual, experienced researcher

## Challenge 4: Issues while collecting data

- Political unrest – strikes
  - Nationwide primary teacher strike
- ⇒ Limited travelling opportunities; security of researchers in the field; disruption of fieldwork plans
- Teacher transfer/involvement in other activities (e.g. surveys)
- ⇒ Can't gather data from intended teachers/students



## Challenge 4: Issues while collecting data

### Way forward:

- Selecting extra respondents/cases – alternative respondents/cases to collect data from
- Scheduling travel around political unrest
- Allocating extra time for fieldwork/flexibility in plans and schedules
- Researchers in the field asked to take extra caution and sometimes to postpone work.

## Concluding remarks

- Be informed! – obstacles & context
- Think through and prepare for all potential eventualities... (Murphy's law)
- Thorough training & briefing for field researchers
- Attention to detail/being thorough at all stages of the research
  - Planning, implementation, analysis, write-up

# References

- Bryman (2008) Social Research Methods (3<sup>rd</sup> edn). OUP (NY)
- Webb, E.J., Campbell, D.T, Schwartz, R.D. & Sechrest, L. (1966) Unobtrusive measures: Non-reactive measures in the social sciences. Rand McNally (Chicago)



ENGLISH *in* ACTION

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